REBEL DESTINY

484 through them, would have meant courting the displeasure of the spirit which animated the troubled stretch, and would have been dangerous. He was a Man Nengere and knew all this well, for was he not ready to marry Dida any 582 time now? He would have to wait as yet, but perhaps 584 during the next planting her breasts would come, and then in a month, two, three, she would be ready to marry. He was, in fact, in the mood even to cast about for a second wife, though his marrying her would have to wait many years. All that would come, for what with the money he already had earned, and the sums he would get for the wood he might bring down the river later, and this money the Bakra would give him, he would have enough to pay for the hammock, the cloth pangi, the handkerchiefs, the 584 bracelets and beads, and whatever else a man needed to give to his woman and her mother for a fine marriage.

484 Going through this stretch of still water, which Bayo always found dull, he thought of this and that, for there was no work for his muscles but the monotony of the dip and stroke of the paddle. Going upstream it was different. There the challenge of the slipping pole-stick against submerged slime-covered rocks made a man prove himself. It spoke to the warrior blood in him, which found no outlet in these quiet times. But this was only idling, and his mind found pleasure in wandering, especially if it happened, as now, to be dark enough to make it worthless for him to look about for the things that grew and stirred in the bush.

Yes, it would be almost three hours before the sun was high, and when it stood there—he indicated the place in the heavens to himself with his eye—he might be loading the Bakra's boats to go up river, for word had come from top-side that the Mamadam would be safe in a few days, and now if the Granman meant for the Bakra to get to the upper river, he would be sending word down almost any time. And he, Bayo, was ready for the journey. 484 Here in the blue canister, which he had bought in the city 574 on the Queen's last birthday with part of the money he had

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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more than a year before her father's death and therefore had not saved her mother from mourning.

"My sons are big so," she showed, pointing to the mortar, "and already my brother takes them with him down the river, and when they are with him he tells them about the creeks and the trees, and where the villages are which are friendly to our people. But when they come here to see me, then they play. They have play guns and play arrows which they make themselves. Into the uncleared bush they shoot them until I call them away to eat. Here I have no man from whom they can learn. Here they only play."

But boys liked to be with men. When the rains came, her brother would let them sit by when he carved, and, seeing him work, they would take up a knife and begin whittling. That was how boys learned to do men's work.

Women children played with "gosai." She put down her pestle, and felt about in her cloth where the child slept, and brought out a gourd, resembling in size a small cucumber. It had beads on top for eyes and a few deft cuts to indicate nose and mouth, while above the eyes was crosshatching for the hair. Until girls were old enough to be of use in the fields, they sat about in the clearing playing with these dolls.

"When they are four and five, then they like to work."

There was, of course, dancing. All dances were opened by the children, and at six and seven the girls knew seketi and awasa, and bandamba, and the boys danced susa.

"Do you dance susa?" we asked the Granman's five-year-old grandson, who was standing with us beside the widow.

"Ai," he said, but once our attention was turned to him he said also, "White man, the children say you carry money in this." He touched a water canteen which hung from the stranger's belt. "I know it is water."

He knew also that shaving cream was soap, and not white people's sacred clay, and now as women came with bottles for the white man's obia water—a name they gave

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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856 644 609 to all the medicine we had for them—he took it upon himself to instruct them to wash the bottles carefully, as he followed us to the storehouse, and to warn them that what was given was not to be taken internally.

"*A taki, a taki-e, u' so mu' bebe*—He says, he is saying, you must not drink this," he explained, with something of his mother's persuasiveness in giving instructions.

His grandmother had said one day half in jest that he would have a tiger spirit which would need to be reckoned with when he grew to manhood. He was a straight-limbed, wiry child, not troubled with the umbilical hernia so often [164] met with in children here in the bush, or with the distended "cassava belly."

The coming of the strangers had eclipsed all desire for [251] familiar diversions here. From early morning the children of the village stood about watching us, so that the brushing of teeth and the lacing of boots were carried on under excited supervision which continued day after day. But to this small grandson of Yankuso we were visitors in his quarter, and whether we were alone in the council house or were in the small house reserved for privacy, he would find his way there and stand about asking questions.

Sometimes, however, when he found us at work and saw that we did not wish to be interrupted, he would lean against the wall for a long time watching us in silence, until presently he would come to life, as it were, walk over to the table, and begin beating the Kromanti rhythm on it.

856 533 868 But he was not the only child who knew the drum rhythms. In the last village in the Pikien Rio, we met a two-year-old child who came to us with more than usual readiness and followed us about, his hand in ours until we came to his mother's house, where he left us to sit down on a wooden plank which lay near it. We had been in conversation with the older people and did not notice his going, until all at once we heard the slow beating of the rhythm to the Sky God. It was this child of two, drumming against the plank on which he sat.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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"*A naki apinti, ei!*—He is playing the apinti," his father said, laughing, and a woman who stood by said that when he grew up he would have an important god. It would be a good god, too, and it might be a great Komfo—a priest reincarnated in him.

Among the little girls who were with us most often, and now stood by with Yankuso's grandson, were the two daughters of Dida, the wife of Chief And'u of S'ei, who went about the Granman's village with white on her face and body. The little girls were also washed in the white clay, and there was white in the wool of their hair. They had the quick, startled movements of their mother, and one of them in particular was a nervous child, shy and easily frightened. She never came too close to the strangers, and, for a time, if they but caught her eye, she would begin to tremble with fear.

"Your daughters are handsome, Dida."

"Ai, they come from a good line," she said, laughing.

The Granman's younger wife said, "They will have many gods when they are big. They will have them from their mother, and theirs will be stronger yet. They are twins."

It was possible, she explained, by looking at a child to know if it would have the gods of the family. Sometimes the gods took a dislike to a child and refused to give it of their wisdom or protection, and sometimes the gods liked it so well that they gave it many gifts—the gift of a fine singing voice, the ability to dance better than others, and the good fortune to be liked.

"Until they are grown, the gods do not trouble them much," she added, "but we in the bush know a child who will have important gods, and we know if the gods will be kindly."

"Do you mean you know because of kunu?"

"*Ma kye*, all gods do not come from kunu."

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One day when sitting among the women, the talk was of twins.

5: Hurault--17kE-5 (1948-1959) 1959 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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165 Mortality. The principal interest of this study is to establish the
128 curve of survival showing, for 100 children born alive, the number surviving at one year, five years, ten years, etc., until the extinction of the group. The life expectancy at birth is given by this curve.

For the Boni, we can make this study with the assumption that the lives of the individuals stopped on the first of January 1950, the date on which one may consider that the conditions which influence mortality have changed, above all as far as the children are concerned.

The study of the mortality of the children born since the first of January 1950, dealt with in part, will furnish useful elements of comparison.

Establishment of the mortality table. Taking up again the records of the 193 women whose lives are completely known to us, and including the children who died in early infancy (10), we have marked down all their children, year by year, on a table.

165 Table of Mortality Referring to 1 January 1950 (10)

Year of birth	Deceased children			Surviving on 1-1-50	Surviving Total children	Average age on 1-1-50	Deceased between 1-1-50 & 1-1-60
	0-1 year	0-5 years	More than 5 before 1-1-50			years	
1888-1899 inclus.	13 (34 %)	13 (39 %)	5	16	16/33 - 48 %)	50	2
1900-1909 inclus.	13 (28 %)	20 (37 %)	8	26	26/54 - 48 %)	45	1
1910-1919 inclus.	21 (34 %)	30 (35 %)	8	47	47/85 - 55 %)	35	1
1920-1929 inclus.	30 (32 %)	38 (31 %)	7	59	59/94 - 63 %)	25	3
1930-1939 inclus.	36 (34 %)	32 (30 %)	8	66	66/106 - 62 %)	15	3
1940-1949 inclus.	40 (33 %)	.....	1	122	122/175 - 70 %)	5	8

165 123 [156] [162] 10. We were particularly careful in asking about children who died in early infancy, an important cause of error in populations without civil records. The age of the children at the time of death has been estimated according to the following guidelines based on the study

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10. (cont.)
of the development of ten children born in 1956 and 1957: sitting up, 7 months; beginning to walk, 1 year (a remarkably clear guideline among the Boni); end of weaning, 14 to 18 months. Beyond that, the ages were estimated by comparison with children living at the time of the inquiry.

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The survival curve results directly from these values. It shows the high mortality of children (30% during the first five years).

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Interruption of conjugal relations after the birth. For three months after delivery the mother must stay away from men and even avoid touching them. Conjugal relation must be interrupted until the child begins to walk alone (eleven to 14 months). However, it is tolerated (but disapprovingly) that they be interrupted only for the time until the child begins to drag himself on his knees /123/ (eight months). They cite the example of Selina's wife who has puny children after pregnancies at too short intervals.

Actually, the interruption of conjugal relations tends to be reduced more and more, the women having condemned milk available and tending to reduce the duration of breast feeding.

Each woman acts as she wishes in this respect; the husband has no power to restrain her.

The Name

Existence of several independent names. Each Boni has two names, the gaá nem or big name, given by the father, and the pikin nem or little name, given by the mother.

These two names are given in totally independent fashion. Generally the pikin nem is given first; in former days they used to wait until the child was six to eight months old; nowadays it is given at the end of a few weeks. The head of the lineage does not intervene either in the choice or the giving of the name.

As a matter of fact, nearly three-quarters of the Boni are designated by one single name, either because the father and mother agreed to give the same name or because one of the two names fell into disuse.

To these two principal names may be added any number of names and cognomens given by the grandparents and later by friends or spouse; often one of the names ends by being given